GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
LAW , JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2898
ANSWERED ON:15.03.2001
VOTE BANK POLITICS IN ELECTIONS
RENUKA CHOWDHURY;SUSHIL KUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE

Will the Minister of LAW , JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have reviewed the impact of various factors like caste-based vote bank politics for free and fair elections and the democratic system; and

(b) if so, the steps taken /being taken to get rid of such parochial influences for holding free and fair elections?

Answer

MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE & COMPANY AFFAIRS AND SHIPPING (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY)

(a)&(b) Every right thinking Indian citizen would be concerned with the influence of the caste factors on the voting pattern and free and fair elections to the Houses of Parliament or State Legislatures.However, much would depend on the candidates set up by the political parties themselves. The role of caste factors could be minimized if each political party decides its candidates for the elections without taking into consideration such factors. However, this is a matter which can be best regulated by the political parties rather than by law or through Government intervention.

As far as provisions of the law are concerned, section 8 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 disqualifies a person for being chosen and for being a member of either House of Parliament or of the State Legislative Assembly or Legislative Council of a State if he has been convicted, inter alia, for an offence attracting section 153A of the Indian Penal Code, which punishes an act prejudicial to maintenance of harmony or promotes enmity between different groups on such grounds as race.